

## RECREATION MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES



# ALTERNATIVES AND THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This section describes the impacts of alternatives that *were not* selected for inclusion in the final master plan.

## RECREATION MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

### Indoor Group Campground Alternatives

One alternative site discussed was a site near the rustic family campground (Old Veteran's Lake) and High Falls Reservoir. This site was not selected because of its poor soil type, further development near High Falls Reservoir, poor road and utility access, and close proximity to the family campground. The anticipated impact of implementing this alternative would be a reduction in the potential enjoyment by campers at both facilities due to a lack of separation. A further potential impact could be the degradation of the natural appearance of the shoreline, or skyline viewshed, as seen from the water, if such a structure were to be developed near High Falls Reservoir.

### Canoe Camping Alternatives

The primitive water access campsites on the two islands in High Falls will stay in the plan. At the time of implementation a multi-discipline group will examine the islands for the best sites to minimize human impacts. Possibly four sites on one island will be selected to keep one island free of camping impacts. Firewood can be delivered to the island sites periodically to minimize depletion of dead and downed wood. One alternative site, on a similar island to the south of the other two, was considered, but rejected because of the reported presence of an active Bald Eagle nest. The anticipated impact of implementing this alternative could be the abandonment of the eagle nest due to constant human disturbance.

### Equestrian Campground Alternatives

Two alternative sites were discussed for possible location of the equestrian campground. The first location was near Caldron Falls off of Landing 12 Lane. This site was not selected because of its proximity to a Native Community Management Area and the potential for invasive species spread. The anticipated impacts of implementing this alternative could have been degradation of the Native Community Management

Area due to the possible spread of invasive alien plant species brought in by vehicles and animals.

The other site is located near county forest land and Bushman Road. This site was not selected because of possible user conflicts and the poor road network. Also, the site is not large enough to accommodate this type of campground, and it has poor soils that are unsuitable type for equestrian trails. Anticipated impacts would be possible user conflicts resulting in a diminished quality of experience, as well as the need for higher than reasonable site maintenance and repair frequency to keep the facilities useable.

### Day Use Area Alternatives

One alternative site that was discussed for development as a Day Use Area was Boat Landing #8. This site was not selected because it is too small, and it is already experiencing high levels of use. Anticipated impacts would be environmental damage including soil compaction, erosion of the shoreline, and tree injury. Spatially, there is no room to expand this area due to the nearby wetlands and adjacent residential properties. These properties, along with the associated vehicle traffic, have the potential to create user conflicts. Finally, with little or no room to change the design of the site, the boat launch would cause an obvious safety concern. In addition this site is near a subdivision and an increase in traffic would create user conflicts.

Other sites on Caldron Falls and on High Falls were considered but were not selected for similar reasons.

### Caldron Falls Boat Landing Capacity Alternatives

The following alternatives were developed in response to staff concerns about safeguarding the status of Caldron Falls Flowage as an Outstanding Resource Water as defined in NR 102. A discussion of each alternative follows.

*Alternative A—No change from original on Caldron Falls*

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- Boat Landing 8: Add 15 boat trailer parking spaces to the existing 25, provide vault toilets and water, redesign and improve the site
- Boat Landing 9 (Musky Point): Redesign the existing 30 space boat trailer parking, provide vault toilets, water, fishing pier, redesign picnic area and swimming area with up to 100 car parking
- Boat Landing 10: Add 15 boat trailer spaces to the existing 15, redesign and improve the site, paved approach
- Boat Landing 11: Add 30 boat trailer parking spaces to the existing 15, provide vault toilets and water, renovate and pave launch ramp and approach
- Boat Landing 12: No change to parking, provide vault toilet, water, changing room, renovate and pave launch ramp
- Boat Landing 13 (Governor Thompson State Park) Add 38 boat trailer parking spaces to the existing 12, totally redesign and rebuild, provide vault toilets, and fishing pier. Shown for comparison purposes, construction begins Fall 2007 – Spring 2008.

This alternative was not selected because the Master Plan Sponsor Team could not justify selecting the “no change” choice, which would ignore the concerns about NR 102 and the status of Caldron Falls as an Outstanding Resource Water.

### *Alternative B—Scope Reductions (Caldron Falls Only)*

- Boat Landing 8: Add 15 boat trailer parking spaces to the existing 25, provide vault toilets and water, redesign and improve the site
- Boat Landing 9 (Musky Point): Redesign the existing 30 space boat trailer parking, provide vault toilets, water, fishing pier, redesign picnic area and swimming area with up to 100-car parking, 50-car parking Phase One
- Boat Landing 10: Add 15 boat trailer spaces to the existing 15, redesign and improve the site, paved approach
- Boat Landing 11: Add 20 boat trailer parking spaces to the existing 15, provide vault toilets and water, renovate and pave launch ramp and approach (Reduce boat trailer parking by 10)
- Boat Landing 12: No change to parking, provide vault toilet, water, changing room, renovate and pave launch ramp

- Boat Landing 13 (Governor Thompson State Park) Add 38 boat trailer parking spaces to the existing 12, totally redesign and rebuild, provide vault toilets, and fishing pier. Shown for comparison purposes, construction begins Fall 2007 – Spring 2008.

This alternative was not selected although it would have provided a possible compromise by reducing the number of boat trailer parking spaces being added on Caldron Falls, while still providing a modest increase. The Master Plan Sponsor Team did not want to compromise on the status of Caldron Falls Flowage as an Outstanding Resource Water.

### *Alternative C—No Boat Trailer Parking Increase over Existing Boat Trailer Capacity on Caldron Falls*

- Boat Landing 8: No additional boat trailer parking spaces. Redesign and rebuild existing 25 boat trailer parking, provide vault toilet and water, renovate and pave approach and launch ramp.
- Boat Landing 9 (Musky Point): No additional boat trailer parking spaces. Redesign and rebuild the existing 30 space boat trailer parking, provide vault toilets, water, fishing pier, redesign picnic area and swimming area with up to 100 car parking, 50-car parking Phase One – same as Alternatives A and B
- Boat Landing 10: No additional boat trailer parking spaces. Redesign and rebuild the existing 15 boat trailer parking spaces, paved approach
- Boat Landing 11: No additional boat trailer parking spaces. Redesign and rebuild existing 15 boat trailer parking spaces, renovate and pave approach and launch ramp, provide vault toilet and water
- Boat Landing 12: No change to parking, provide vault toilet, water, changing room, renovate and pave launch ramp
- Boat Landing 13 (Governor Thompson State Park) Add 38 boat trailer parking spaces to the existing 12, totally redesign and rebuild, provide vault toilets, and fishing pier. Shown for comparison purposes, construction begins Fall 2007 – Spring 2008.

Note: If conditions warrant any increase in boat trailer parking in the future, a master plan amendment or variance process may be used to officially modify the master plan.

This is the Preferred Alternative. It was chosen because it best fulfills the need to preserve the water quality and habitat of

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Caldron Falls Flowage. All three alternatives sustain the project at South Bay 13 within Governor Thompson State Park. This access site currently has 12 boat trailer parking spaces and will have 50 when completed, a net increase of 38 spaces. The redesign of this access site incorporates Best Management Practices and Stormwater Management features intended to safeguard the future water quality of Caldron Falls Flowage. Although this access site will add 38 boat trailer capacity, the facility will be controlled by the state park staff. When the facility is filled to capacity a small overflow parking area would be implemented. When full capacity is reached the manager has the authority to close the facility until conditions change.

**All Terrain Vehicle Alternatives**

One alternative that the state forest was asked to consider by users was an All-Terrain Vehicle play area south of Johnson Falls Road. This alternative was not selected because of environmental and safety concerns. Potential impacts would be the creation of an unsustainable trail condition. A known nearby osprey nest could also be negatively impacted by the implementation of this alternative.

**LAND MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES****Forest Production Alternative****Forest Production Area**

Alternative: Designate special forest management zones along the free-flowing portion of the river corridor based on slopes, hydrology, topography, and vegetation types. These zones

would be given a special emphasis using passive management and allowing for natural regeneration and conversion in many areas. The goals would be to maintain an intact forested corridor that would provide for connectivity between forested blocks and minimize deer impacts to the area. Most of the declining aspen stands would be allowed to naturally convert to other longer-lived species. Any increase to the conifer component of the forest would be caused primarily through natural white pine regeneration where possible.

This alternative land management classification was not chosen because: 1) it would not allow for maintaining current levels of aspen acreage for forest productivity and habitat for wildlife game species, 2) would result in a number of declining oak and aspen stands that would persist for several years and could be expected to be more susceptible to gypsy moth infestations, 3) would be less productive, 4) would not allow for establishing jack pine in this area, and 5) in areas dominated by aspen, losing the site to hazel brush competition for a period of time. As noted above, even with a Forest Production emphasis, a large portion of this area will not be actively managed due to the steep slopes, visual impact, and the 200 foot Shoreland Management Overlay Zone. Anticipated impacts would be reduced levels of aspen acreage, causing lower forest productivity in terms of wood products and wild game habitat; and the creation of declining stands of oak and aspen thus increasing the susceptibility to infestations of gypsy moth and invasion of hazel brush.



## LAND MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

### NATIVE COMMUNITY BOUNDARY MODIFICATIONS AND REFINEMENT

#### High Falls North

Preferred Alternative: Modify the original boundary from the biotic inventory's "Primary Site." Trimming the boundary in the northeast portion of the site would exclude an area that did not contain bedrock glades. The new boundary limits the area north of the river to the prominent bedrock features along the river.

Other Alternative: Keep the Biotic Inventory Primary Site boundary. This alternative was not chosen since the site would have included areas that were not consistent with the goals for this site. The anticipated impact would be a lack of protection for the bedrock glades.

Issue: Management Focus—Barrens Management

Preferred Alternative: Manage the site for an older, multi-species Northern Dry / Dry-mesic forest with increased proportions of red maple and conifers (favoring white pine) with high-quality bedrock inclusions.

Other Alternative: Manage the site for barrens along with Northern dry forest. The alternative was not chosen due to the lack of opportunities for managing for high-quality barrens at this site. The anticipated impact of this action would simply be difficulty or outright failure of attempts to establish a high quality barrens community on this site.

#### Location of boundaries

Preferred Alternative: Expand the original boundary (same as the Johnson Falls Dam "Primary Site" from the Biotic Inventory) to include all state owned lands which are west and north of the Medicine Brook up to the Johnson Falls Dam, and including all privately owned lands south of High Falls Road. This alternative is preferred because it includes all the lands that contain the high quality natural communities and associated species which are in need of special management.

Other Alternative: Adopt the original boundary which was not inclusive enough. The anticipated impact of this action would

be the inability to manage contiguous tracts of forest communities in an efficient manner.

#### Location of boundary—Caldron Falls

Preferred Alternative: Adopt a boundary similar to the Caldron Falls Primary Site from the Biotic Inventory, except that the west line will be expanded to the east shoreline of Boat Landing 10 Bay, and the north boundary will be expanded slightly northward to the present property line.

Other Alternative: Adopt the original Caldron Falls Primary Site boundary without any changes. This was not adopted because it would have the potential impact of excluding some small areas to the west and north that logically should be included in the native community.

Other Alternative: Expand the original Caldron Falls Primary Site boundary to the west and north as described above, but shrink the east boundary slightly to the legal description line to make a hard boundary. An anticipated impact of this alternative would be that it would not allow an adequate buffer on the east side to protect the black spruce swamp.

Management Focus —Kirby Lake

Preferred Alternative: Manage this site as a Native Community Management Area. Important features to protect include Northern Mesic Forest, Northern Wet-mesic Forest, and several rare plants.

Other Alternative: Include this site with the nearby Fly-fishing Area, utilizing similar management objectives for that site (currently an emphasis on forest production with aesthetic considerations). This was not chosen because it would have the potential impact of not adequately addressing management considerations for this site.